



QUARTERLY

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NEWS-LETTER

WORKING WITH THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

FOUR NEW FRANK NORRIS LETTERS

PART TWO

Elected to Membership

Letters

Gifts and Acquisitions

*

Number 4, Autumn 1991

VOLUME FIFTY-SIX

Founded in 1912, The Book Club of California is a non-profit organization of book lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

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Working with The Book Club of California

JOHN DREYFUS

BEFORE I LEFT LONDON, I considered what would be of greatest interest to local listeners and readers about the books I have designed and written for The Book Club of California. I decided to focus on what took place behind the scenes, which often involved friends who might be known to members of The Book Club of California, The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, or The Colophon Club.

As seasoned book people such as yourselves know, books often come into this world very much the way we did: after a series of painful spasms. In the case of my relations with The Book Club, there have been few painful moments, and those that were, I feel, are easily skipped here.

I first became professionally involved with The Book Club of California through my friend Norman Strouse. We met in the 1960s, several years before he moved to St. Helena, where he still lives. He was then in charge of the J. Walter Thompson agency in New York, where he had a triplex apartment on Beekman Place. One large room was taken up by his vast collection of books. I happened to be in New York one Labor Day and was having trouble getting my hands on a copy of The Golden Cockerel Press edition of *The Four Gospels* illustrated in 1931 by Eric Gill. I was soon to give a lecture on Gill's book illustrations, and I needed to check a few points and also to arrange for a friend to make slides from *The Four Gospels*.

The librarian of The Grolier Club (where there was no copy of this masterpiece) made an appointment for me to visit Norman's library to see his copy. He had it ready for me and pointed out one special feature which I shall mention later. While I was there, he brought in a manuscript written in a very spiky hand by the English Victorian bookbinder and printer, T. J. Cobden-Sanderson. Norman left me alone with it for a short while, and I was quite amazed by its revelations about Cobden-Sanderson's bitter quarrel with his partner, Emery Walker, which

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eventually led to the punches of their Doves Press type being thrown into the Thames. (I must add that English Private Press printers in the early twentieth century have had a weakness for chucking their custom-made punches into the water—Ricketts and Shannon threw their Vale Press punches into the Thames, and Lucien Pissaro left orders for his Ergany Press punches to be dropped into the English Channel half-way between France, where he grew up, and England, where he settled down.)

I found the revelations of Norman's manuscript riveting because I had heard the other side of the story some years earlier from Walker's daughter, who still lived in the house on the Thames where her father had lived and died. Also, I was much impressed with the fact that Norman, busy as he was, had made a transcription of the Cobden-Sanderson manuscript, complete except for a few words he had been unable to decipher.

The first tangible result of our shared fascination with Cobden-Sanderson and Walker was a limited edition which Norman commissioned from Leonard Bahr's Adagio Press in 1969. This was a leaf book with pages from editions printed by Cobden-Sanderson and Walker at their Doves Press; it also contained essays on the men involved—one on Cobden-Sanderson written by Norman, and the other on his partnership with Walker written by me.

Norman owned a great many other papers written by Cobden-Sanderson, and among these were several versions of his lectures on bookbinding and other subjects. A few of these were proposed for publication by The Book Club of California. Transcripts were typed, I am thankful to say, before I was asked whether I would tackle the task of editing them, and also of writing a Preface, Introduction, and whatever else might be helpful to anyone tempted to buy the Club's publication.

My first problem was to decide how to deal with several variant texts of the book-binding lectures. Although Cobden-Sanderson re-wrote these several times, he carried over many passages verbatim from one version to the next. Eventually, it was agreed that I should establish one master text of the lecture on bookbinding and that I would prepare three others to go with it. I have somewhat vague memories of decisions being taken at a yacht club in San Francisco, where dry martinis of great nau-

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tical strength were served at the table which I gather was regularly occupied at weekends by Albert Sperisen and David Magee.

Back in London, I began to work out what additional material might make the book more useful and interesting. Whenever I edit or introduce a text, I try to add to existing knowledge about it, or to bring a new approach to the material it contains. As twelve of Cobden-Sanderson's fifteen bookbinding pupils had been American ladies, and some of these had played an influential part in the development of fine bookbinding in this country, I decided to make a list of these ladies. (By the way, Cobden-Sanderson accepted only young ladies as pupils, and they were most kindly treated by his suffragette wife, Annie Cobden-Sanderson, daughter of a popular British politician named Cobden.) By the time I started work on the list, and was keen to question any member of the family who might know details of the pupils, Annie and her son Richard were dead. The only other child, Stella, was very much alive. By then she was in her mid-eighties and totally deaf; nonetheless, her memory was as bright as ever, and whenever I checked what she told me against contemporary records, she always proved completely accurate. Communication with her was rather hard at first, but I soon got used to scribbling down my questions in a large scrawl on a spiral-bound reporter's handbook that was shunted between us as we sat at a table. She was a fund of information, and, like Emery Walker's daughter, was completely devoted to her father, regarding Cobden-Sanderson's foibles as rather a joke, and obviously taking the line that Walker was a bit of a stick, whereas her father had been mercurial and fun to be with. It struck me that most daughters have a charming capacity to recall only what was best in their fathers. With two girls of my own, I take comfort from that observation.

The other information I thought was needed for an American publication on Cobden-Sanderson was a list of the lectures he had given in the United States when he visited, with Annie, in the summer of 1907.

The text and illustrations for my book were beautifully printed in Los Angeles by Saul and Lillian Marks. It was the last book he produced, and, much to my delight, he and Lillian came to see me in London shortly before it was completed. He seemed to be as pleased as I was with his design

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of the book. Some of the illustrations showed Cobden-Sanderson's talent for using ornamental tools on his bindings, so I was particularly happy that Saul matched them by his own deft handling of printer's flowers. With these Saul built up several beautiful initials and headbands, which he printed in a delicate second color. He also worked wonders in reproducing some rather faint designs for bookbindings which Cobden-Sanderson had stamped out on paper to show his staff in the bindery how lines and ornamental tools were to be stamped in gold. I was very lucky indeed to have Saul Marks¹ design my first work for The Book Club of California.

My second work for the Club also owed a great deal to the skill and energy of its designer. This time it was Abe Lerner, for many years a leading figure in the New York group called The Typophiles. Occasionally, that group joined forces with The Book Club of California to produce a small work, with separate and distinctive title-pages and colophons for each sponsor. This happened with my short text published in 1976, *William Caxton and his Quincentenary*. I had lectured on this subject at The Grolier Club in 1975 as part of Robert Leslie's lecture series called "Heritage of the Graphic Arts." Normally I resist proposals to print my lectures because they usually rely heavily on a great many colored slides, so that much of the lecture becomes a commentary on my slides, which has the advantage that the audience can look while it listens. Moreover, I try to use a rather conversational style when I lecture, so my spoken text often needs radical changes if it is to read well. My talk at The Grolier Club, however, was given without slides, and as Abe had offered to edit my text for publication, as well as to supervise the design and production in New York, I agreed that he should turn my talk into a chapbook.

At the time I had a lot of other things on my hands, because I had been made Chairman of the Printing Historical Society in London; my three-year term of office coincided with the quincentenary of Caxton's introduction of printing from moveable type to England in 1476. I had taken on the job of organizing a major international congress in London during 1976 to mark this quincentenary. For this event I sent out an attractive prospectus designed by John Ryder, and I was able to create

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wider interest by speaking about the congress at The Grolier Club a year in advance.

I remarked above that I usually try to add to existing knowledge whenever I break into print, but when I wrote the Caxton lecture, I followed the advice once given to a young research student: "Your job," said his teacher, "is to condense knowledge, not extend it." Where I was exceptionally lucky in this particular assignment was in being allowed to work one wet winter weekend in Curt Buhler's office in the Pierpont Morgan Library. There he had put together a wide-ranging collection of books and papers about Caxton, several of them written by Buhler himself, and many others annotated by him with significant corrections or comments. So I had the great advantage of condensing a wonderfully rich body of material. Later my text was augmented by a few illustrations chosen by Abe Lerner, and I think the work achieved what it modestly set out to do.

My third job for the Book Club was to design a work called *Themes in Aquatint*². I also supervised its printing in England, where the author, Colin Franklin, lived and worked. He had written quite a long text which was divided into eight sections. The wording of the section headings was very terse indeed. Five of them consisted of merely one or two words, and the longest contained only five short words. To make a more striking feature of these headings, I decided to surround the words with elaborate frames built up from printer's flowers. One hazard that sometimes arises with these is that you may create a spotty effect, because some ornaments have a tendency to appear darker than others once they are printed. This is why it often helps to print an arrangement of ornaments in a second color.

For *Themes in Aquatint* I managed to pick ornaments which created a sufficiently harmonious effect for them to be printed throughout in black. Working on this task was all the more pleasant because Colin and I had been friends for several years. In 1973 I had designed a Cambridge Christmas book he had written on Emery Walker's theories of printing, and also on his relations with William Morris and Cobden-Sanderson. When *Themes in Aquatint* went into production, I was typographical adviser to Cambridge University Press (where the text was printed) and a

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director of the Curwen Press in London (where the color plates were printed). I was well placed to keep an eye on progress.

The main problem I had to overcome was to obtain color transparencies of adequate quality for making the plates. If you start with a color transparency that is too small, distorted, or unevenly lit, you will never be able to produce a satisfactory reproduction. The first transparencies Colin gave me were far too small, and several subjects were seriously distorted because the photographer had failed to keep the surface of the lens level with the surface of the aquatints. They all had to be re-made properly in a larger size and with better lighting.

Several of the aquatints were quite large, and as each of the sixteen had to be reproduced in the size of the original, the format had to be exceptionally large. To make Colin's text inviting and pleasant to read, I set it in double columns, which also suited many quoted passages of doggerel verse in his text. For an appearance of cohesion, I gave more than usual emphasis to the page headings and tied the pairs of columns together by putting thick-and-thin rules between the page-headings and the text below. All the text was set in a recutting of a late eighteenth-century type originally made for the London publisher John Bell. Monotype Bell gave the text a pleasant twinkle and imparted the right period flavor.

The binding of such a large book needed to be strong as well as decorative, so I used a marbled paper made by Douglas Cockerell at his bindery just outside Cambridge, where he had two full-time marblers on the staff. The marbling was done on sheets of strong brown wrapping paper which stands up extremely well to normal handling. Moreover, the shiny side to which the marbled design is applied creates a pleasantly sheened colored background. That—as they say—just about wraps up the story of my work on the design and production of *Themes in Aquatint*.

My latest work is the first which I have both written and designed for the Club. Titled *A Typographical Masterpiece*³, it describes an illustrated edition of *The Four Gospels* designed and planned jointly by Eric Gill and his friend Robert Gibbings. It was printed at the Golden Cockerel Press in 1931, when Gibbings directed the press.

In the mid-1950s I had the luck to work closely with Gibbings when

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he was engraving illustrations for an edition of Charles Darwin's account of *The Voyage of "The Beagle."* This had been commissioned by George Macy for his Limited Editions Club of New York. I was responsible for its typographical design and supervised its printing at Cambridge University Press. Soon after it was published, Macy died, and two years later, Gibbings died. With hindsight, I regret that I never asked Gibbings to tell me more about the years when he and Gill collaborated on several books printed at the Golden Cockerel Press. During the last twenty-five years, however, I have been able to track down so much about their edition of *The Four Gospels* that I have nearly made up for the opportunities I missed while Gibbings was alive.

Earlier I mentioned how important friends have been in making my work so pleasant. So let me now try to draw together the threads of friendship which came together in the writing of my latest book.

I never met Eric Gill, who died in 1940, when I was a young soldier. I did become a close friend of his younger brother, Evan, while he put together his *Bibliography of Eric Gill*, which Cambridge University Press printed to my design in 1953. It gave detailed descriptions of the books and pamphlets designed by Eric, and it included small-scale reproductions of a great many title pages. I became intensely familiar with Eric's typographical output. I also gained a useful knowledge of his inscriptional work while I was working as typographical adviser to the Monotype Corporation. Gill had done a lot of work for that firm, and to help his impoverished widow, the corporation bought from her Gill's papers concerning his work as a letterer and type designer. This important and bulky archive had never been properly listed, so I persuaded Evan to compile another illustrated book on *The Inscriptional Work of Eric Gill*, published in 1964.

Among Gill's papers were the original sketches, as well as trials, proofs, and correspondence for his Golden Cockerel type. These documents gave me a thorough grasp of the way he had set about the task of designing the type used for printing *The Four Gospels*. An even greater excitement was to find that my Harvard friend Philip Hofer, a long-time admirer and collector of Gill's work, had bought the original page paste-up for this edition. In the paste-up were Gill's original sketches for the

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engravings he later cut on wood for this book. By the time Gibbings and Gill collaborated on *The Four Gospels* in 1931, they had known each other for six years and worked together on several other Golden Cockerel Press books. They had become close friends, and it happened that both were the sons of Anglican clergymen. With their sound knowledge of the Gospels, they made a most detailed plan for the way their edition was to be illustrated, but Gill didn't begin to make his sketches until he received a page paste-up on which gaps of various sizes had been left for him to fill with engravings of previously agreed-upon subjects.

Returning to my theme of friendship, it was through Evan Gill that I first heard of Albert Sperisen, the doyen of book collecting in San Francisco, and a devoted admirer of Eric Gill. Then began a correspondence with Albert, which led to frequent meetings. He introduced me to the librarians in charge of special collections at the Gleeson Library, who showed me several papers relating to the Golden Cockerel edition of *The Four Gospels*. While Florian Shasky was at the Gleeson Library, he paid me a visit in London, where I took him round to Broadcasting House, because that building is adorned with a fine set of sculptures on which Gill worked at the same time that he was busy with his engravings for *The Four Gospels*. As we walked around the building, along came my friend Douglas Cleverdon, who had started life as a bookseller before joining the BBC and becoming the producer of some of the best plays heard on British radio. In the late 1920s Douglas ran a bookshop in Bristol: The fascia board above the main window was lettered for him by Eric Gill in letter forms which later became a widely popular type called Gill Sans (a rather silly name because sans is the French word for "without," and, as a French friend once remarked to me, only the illogical English would define something by a feature it lacks—in this case a serif, or final stroke).

Cleverdon led us into the building to show us more sculptures by Gill, and also an original sketch which hung in a room only staff could enter. One visit made a deep impression on Florian, and you will soon learn how that affected my latest book.

Steve Corey, Florian's successor, also became my friend and came to stay with me last year in London. He located and copied several relevant

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papers in the Gleeson collection which are quoted in my book. Elsewhere in California I had a vast amount of help from the Clark Library in Los Angeles, which owns Gill's diaries and ledgers; still further afield, I have been able to make use of Gill material in the Humanities Research Center at Austin, Texas.

The idea of writing a book on the subject first occurred to me in 1981 after a party given in Heffer's bookshop in Cambridge to celebrate publication of my *History of the Nonesuch Press*. A director of the bookshop who had known me for years said that I ought to follow it up with a book of similar scale and importance. For some time I had been lecturing on the Gill-Gibblings *Four Gospels*, and I had included the subject in a course I gave at Columbia University in the Rare Book School. The only catch was that the suggestion had come from a bookseller, not a publisher.

In the early 1980s a London publisher named Gordon Fraser was interested in publishing books on typographical subjects. I made a provisional agreement with his firm to publish my book. The company had plenty of money from its main business, which was the production and sale of greeting cards and postcards. The founder, however, had started life as a bookseller in Cambridge while I was an undergraduate, and his abiding love and his later indulgence was to publish beautifully produced books. Sadly, he died in a skiing accident, after which the firm stopped publishing books and now concentrates on producing cards. So I found myself with a nearly completed text, but no publisher.

My luck turned when Florian Shasky came to dine with me in London a few years ago. He asked me what I had been doing recently, and when I told him of my work on *The Four Gospels*, he said he would like to propose it for consideration by The Book Club of California's Publications Committee. Later, when the book went into production, I was glad to find that the Publications Committee was chaired by Gary Kurutz, who had heard me lecture on the subject at Columbia University, and who had earlier shown me around the California State Library when I visited Sacramento a few years ago with Sandy and Helen Berger.

There were a few unusual things about the way my book was designed and produced. The format had to be large because it was essential to

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include several full-page facsimiles of the original Golden Cockerel edition. In fact, the format I chose matches exactly the 1931 volume. Because the quality of the illustrations was so important, I picked the best printing house I knew in the United States, the Meriden-Stinchour Press in Vermont. I had been there in 1953 on my first visit to this country, and I have since been back several times. In the past it has printed a few other books which I have designed. Evidently it is equally admired by the Houghton Library at Harvard, which showed its confidence by letting the Press borrow the original Gill drawings and related material at Harvard, so that reproductions from my book were made directly from the originals, instead of from photographs of them, which results in some degree of loss. Furthermore, the printers were allowed to keep the originals long enough to check proofs against them, and throughout my own work the staff of the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts in the Houghton Library had helped me by their unfailing courtesy and efficiency.

In the spring of this year I took the originals to Vermont and discussed with the resourceful staff how they should be treated. This gave me a chance to make clear my own ideas and preferences and at the same time to benefit from the staff's suggestions for ways of achieving what I wanted.

On the front cover of the binding, a device has been stamped which Gill made in 1931 for the copies printed on vellum at the Golden Cockerel Press. I had seen Gill's sketch for this embellishment in Norman Strouse's copy, in which there was also his correspondence about it with Gibbings. Both the sketch and the correspondence have since been given to the Gleeson Library.

Work on *A Typographical Masterpiece* went through with surprisingly few hiccups, given the fact that the publisher was here in San Francisco, I was in London, and the printers and binder in Vermont. Fax is a wonderful thing; without it, the job would have taken far longer and been much more troublesome.

At a late stage I felt sheepish as I read through a welter of queries from an editor who had read the press proofs, though I am eternally grateful to her for spotting errors which might otherwise have gone uncorrected. I

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am also grateful to her because whenever I am needled by an editor's queries, I remember an amusing exchange between Lawrence of Arabia and his publisher over a work called *Revolt in the Desert* (an abridgment of his earlier privately printed edition of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*). It concerned a statement about Meleager, a poet and philosopher who was at his peak around the year 100 B.C.. Lawrence referred to him as "Meleager, the immoral poet." The publisher's reader was inclined to change this to "Meleager, the immortal poet," but added, "The author *may* mean 'immoral' after all." To this Lawrence replied: "Immortality I know, immortality I cannot tell. As you please: Meleager won't sue us for libel."

To conclude, I want to say why I decided to call my latest book *A Typographical Masterpiece*. There were two reasons: because it reflects my high opinion of the book it describes, and because for such a large title page I wanted two hefty, long words to create a suitable effect. But in the back of my mind there may have been a third reason, which did not occur to me until recently. In the past few weeks, when friends here have asked me what I have been doing recently, I have been able to answer, in a very offhand way, "Oh, I've just been writing and designing *A Typographical Masterpiece*,"—which leaves an italic ambiguity in the air.

Barbara Jane Land



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Four New Frank Norris Letters

PART TWO

JESSE S. CRISLER

NORRIS'S LETTER TO YONE NOGUCHI (1875-1947) intrigues the student of Norris's life and works in several respects. Writing nearly seven months after the appearance of *The Octopus* (wherein Norris satirized Noguchi's quasi-meditative lyrics which had initially appeared in the pages of *The Lark*, a "little magazine" written by *Les Jeunes*, a group of self-styled Bay Area anti-philistines, whose ranks included both writers and artists, most of whom were good friends of Norris during his San Francisco days), Norris either assumes that Noguchi has not read or is unaware of his latest novel; that, if he has read it, he has missed its thinly veiled satire of the poet's work, or that—even if he does know of it or has perhaps read it—the gentlemanly thing for them both is to ignore it, thereby allowing himself to write to Noguchi in a thoroughly business-like manner. Naturally Norris can scarcely overlook their having met several years before: both Gelett Burgess (1866-1951) and Charles Warren Stoddard (1843-1909) had treated Noguchi as a protégé in years past. Norris's association with the former had begun at Berkeley when Burgess taught topographical drawing. It continued during their various writing ventures in San Francisco, including *The Lark* and *The Wave*, and had been sustained in New York, where Burgess had introduced Norris to Howells when Norris first arrived in the city. As for the latter, Stoddard, Norris certainly knew him, though not so well as he knew Burgess. Curiously, however, Stoddard, not Burgess, probably provided the appropriate context for a short-lived correspondence between Norris and Noguchi. Earlier, on 13 September 1900, Norris had asked Stoddard, "Whatever became of Yone Noguchi?", acknowledging that, while he probably could offer Noguchi only a "little" assistance at best, still "that little would help" (Crisler *Collected Letters* 124-125). Thus, when Noguchi apparently wrote Norris more than a year later regarding

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author royalty rates, Norris readily responded, providing the information but in non-committal fashion. As he had previously demonstrated in the letter to McClure [Part One, above], Norris took his duties as a Doubleday, Page employee seriously. In this letter his tone is gracious and devoid of envy. That Norris mentions his new address in New York suggests that he would even welcome Noguchi there, a small echo of the warm support Norris himself, as a literary newcomer, had received several years earlier from another, more “established” writer, William Dean Howells.

[DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY¹
PUBLISHERS
34 UNION SQUARE, NEW YORK]
Nov. 13. [1901]²

My Dear Yone Noguchi:

Of course I remember you perfectly well, and I hope to see you again if fortune favors. I am at 148th Street and Broadway.³

As to publisher's terms, the contract generally reads that the author receives 10 per cent royalty on the retail price of every copy sold, and I think in most cases that is fair enough, sometimes after the first five thousand are sold the author's royalty is 15% on all subsequent copies sold.⁴ With best wishes for your success I am

*Very Sincerely Yours
Frank Norris*

1 ALS in the Yone Noguchi Collection, Mita-bungaku Library, Keio University, Tokyo; its publication here corrects minor errors that occurred in its initial appearance in Ikuko Atsumi, ed., *Yone Noguchi: Collected English Letters* (Tokyo: The Yone Noguchi Society, 1975): 70. Sal Noto initially brought the letter to my attention, having learned of it from Howard Lachtman, whose research in connection with an anthology of stories set in San Francisco at the turn of the century by “local writers” led him to the Noguchi edition (Noto to Jesse S. Crisler, 6 April 1990); I am indebted to Toshiko Hirota of the Information Service Section, Keio University Library, for providing me with a photocopy of the letter.

Norris addressed a standard Doubleday, Page envelope to “Yone Noguchi Esq.—Bayonne,—N.J.”; in the lower left-hand corner of the envelope, he also added his own return address: “from—Frank Norris—148th+ Boulevard—N. Y.” Apparently, Norris had trouble remembering that his new address was the corner of Broadway,

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rather than Boulevard; see his letter to Edward Livermore Burlingame (1848-1922) for an earlier example of this identical error (Crisler *Collected Letters* 166).

2 Since Norris first refers to Noguchi in his letter to Stoddard on 13 September 1900, Stoddard could easily have suggested that Noguchi write Norris immediately for the promised “help,” which would nicely consign this letter to the same year. But Norris’s allusion to his address at “148th and Broadway” definitely fixes the letter’s date as 1901, the Norrises having moved to their final New York address by 10 October 1901, when Norris first uses it in his correspondence (Crisler *Collected Letters* 166).

3 The name of the building was The Riverview, located at 3605 Broadway.

4 Surviving contracts for Norris’s own novels confirm most of the technical information which Norris here supplies Noguchi. While a contract for *A Man’s Woman* (1900) has not been located, the contracts for *Moran of the Lady Letty*, *McTeague*, *Blix* (1899), and *The Octopus*, all note Norris’s publisher’s agreement to pay him a standard royalty of ten percent. In the case of the two earliest novels, the royalty is to be paid “on all copies sold”; for *Blix*, a note on the contract which has been duly initialled by Norris himself stipulates that Norris will receive the customary ten percent per copy “after 1,000 copies have been sold”; and the contract for *The Octopus* returns to the regular royalty (see the “Memorandum of Agreement” for each novel, now part of the Frank Norris Collection, the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; *Moran of the Lady Letty*, dated 12 August 1898, signed by Norris and Doubleday, representing Doubleday and McClure’s; *McTeague*, dated 2 March 1899, signed by Norris and Doubleday again, witnessed by Henry Wysham Lanier [1873-1948]; *Blix*, dated 26 April 1899, signed by Doubleday and Norris, and witnessed again by Lanier; and *The Octopus*, dated 24 May 1901, signed by Norris and “Doubleday Page & Company” [almost certainly in Lanier’s hand], and witnessed by L. A. Comstock, one of the firm’s managers). By far the most interesting contract is that for Norris’s last written novel, *The Pit* (1903), dated 31 May 1902. Signed, like others, by Norris and a representative of his publisher, in this case Lanier, acting for Doubleday Page & Company, and witnessed by Comstock, the contract has been amended by Lanier to reflect that the standard royalty of ten percent will be paid the author on all copies “until 5,000 have been sold; 12 1/2% on the second 5,000; and 15% on all beyond 10,000,” a slight deviation from the “15%” which Norris reports to Noguchi but evidently in keeping with Doubleday, Page’s usual policy. On the contract for Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* (1900), for example, dated 20 August 1900, for which Norris himself served as witness, and which Dreiser and Lanier, the latter acting for Doubleday, Page, signed, Lanier’s notation concerning royalties records that Dreiser was to receive ten percent on all copies “until 1,500” [have been sold]; 12 1/2% on the second 1,500, and 15% on all subsequent copies above 3000” (both of these memoranda are in the Frank Norris Collection, Bancroft).



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Previously supposed an inscription, a brief thank-you note by Norris to “Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Parker” is actually a fourth new letter. Written on a piece of paper roughly measuring four by three-and-one-half inches, it has been pasted to the inside front cover of a copy of *McTeague*, now in the Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. According to Patricia C. Willis, Curator of American Literature at the Beinecke, “technically speaking, it probably was a note accompanying the book and not an inscription, assuming that Norris was not in the habit of pasting inscriptions in books given to his friends” (Willis to Jesse S. Crisler, 17 September 1987). Despite Harrison Magion Parker’s pledging Norris’s own fraternity, Phi Gamma Delta, at Berkeley as a freshman, 1894-1895 (1896 *Blue and Gold* 56), Norris, by that time already a “post-graduate” student at Harvard, could not have known Parker then. They certainly knew each other by the early spring of 1896: Parker joined the staff of *The Wave* as its Business Manager—his name and title appear thus on the masthead—beginning with the issue of 1 February 1896 (Crisler 225); and Norris returned from his South African escapade not long after (Walker 125). Although Parker’s name disappears from the masthead of *The Wave* after 14 August 1897, his importance to the weekly continued, though now as a society news item rather than as an employee. Notes in two issues of the periodical report that “Mr. Harrison Parker arrived this week in San Francisco. He is just as bright and handsome as when he was here a few years ago, and does not appear a day older,” and that “Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Parker have leased a charming apartment at West 83d street for the winter. Mrs. Parker is delighted with New York, and is making friends quite as rapidly in the metropolis as she did in San Francisco” (*The Wave* 19 October 1901:8; 30 November 1901:10. I am grateful to Professor Joseph R. McElrath, Florida State University, for help in tracking down information on Parker.) Beyond her appearance in this note and in Norris’s letter to her and her husband, nothing more is known regarding the elusive “Mrs. Parker.”

This letter represents a common practice of Norris’s, his acknowledgment of friends for their help, kindness, or friendship. Some of them in turn, like the Parkers and Annie Cadwalader Waterhouse (1875-1961),

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wife of Norris's roommate at Berkeley, Seymour Waterhouse (1871-1947), tipped their "thank-you's" from their novelist friend into the copies of his books which his notes accompanied (Crisler *Collected Letters* 63). Originally presented as an inscription in *Frank Norris: Collected Letters* 220, this note is rightfully reprinted here for the first time as a letter.

[Spring 1902?]¹

To Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Parker, a belated Xmas remembrance from²
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Norris.³

1 As with several of Norris's undated pieces of correspondence, this letter is difficult to place chronologically. At its initial presentation as an inscription to assign it to the early spring of 1900 seemed justified since it accompanied a copy of *McTeague* that had been published the previous year; the discovery of further information on the Parkers, however, suggests the Christmas of 1902 as a more probable date for the letter: As noted in *The Wave*, the Parkers, only a month before the holiday season of 1901, had relocated to New York, where, coincidentally, the Norrises had also recently moved after a summer spent in resorts and hotels in New Jersey and New York City. Quite naturally, the two old friends and their wives—the Norrises at The Riverview, at 148th Street and Broadway, and the Parkers farther south at "West 83d street"—very likely met at Christmas for convivial renewal of their friendship (*The Wave* 30 November 1901: 10).

2 At some point during the previous year, Norris had inscribed a copy of *The Octopus* to Parker "in remembrance of the old *Wave* days" (Crisler 225); this copy of *McTeague* thus extended Parker's collection.

3 That the note comes from both of the Norrises supports a later date for it than had originally been supposed.

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THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of The Book Club of California will be held in the Club rooms on Tuesday, October 15, 1991, at noon. Please give us a call at 415-781-7532 if you plan to attend.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

John Dreyfus was Assistant Printer to Cambridge University Press, England, for nearly ten years and later Typographical Advisor. He also worked in the same capacity for the Monotype Corporation in England. This article has been adapted from his lecture and slide presentation before The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco and The Colophon Club at their Joint Annual Meeting, November 20, 1990.

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Jesse S. Crisler is Chairman of the Language, Literature, and Communications Division at Brigham Young University, Hawaii. He was the editor of Frank Norris's *Collected Letters* published by the Club in 1986.

ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

The two classifications above Regular membership at \$55 per year are Sustaining membership at \$75 per year and Patron membership at \$150 per year.

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Wayne C. Leicht	Laguna Beach	Jennifer Larson
Christine Taylor	Oakland	Harlan Kessel
Rick Wilkinson	San Francisco	James Robertson

New Regular Members

Susan Bettelheim	Lafayette	Harold Wollenberg
Chloe's Book Store	Sacramento	Membership Committee
Marian Alice Ecker	Las Vegas, NV	Membership Committee
Anne V. Mead	Pebble Beach	Mrs. Cecil Wahle
Herbert F. Morse	Newhall	Regis Graden
Reva Saper	Mill Valley	Jerry Cole
Laurie J. Thompson	San Francisco	Harold Wollenberg
James & Gayle Tunnell	San Francisco	Mrs. Meri Jaye

The following member has transferred from Regular to Sustaining membership status (\$75):

Daniel G. Volkmann	San Francisco
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

A TYPOGRAPHICAL MASTERPIECE, written and designed by John Dreyfus, has received high praise in bibliophilic circles for its scholarship and contribution to the life of Eric Gill. This large-format, handsome volume is selling exceedingly well. A few copies are still available for purchase by members. It is a must buy for all those interested in the book arts and in the story behind one of the finest illustrated books of the twentieth century.

The publication of *CONTROVERSIAL JAMES: An Essay on the Life and Work of George Wharton James* by Roger K. Larson, M.D., of Fresno, has been celebrated by

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well attended receptions at the Book Club rooms and at Mission San Fernando. Lawrence Clark Powell contributed the Foreword. Designed by Jim and Carolyn Robertson of Yolla Bolly Press in an edition of 400 copies and richly illustrated with James photographs, this critical biography of James the quixotic and prolific author has nearly sold out in its first month.

This winter, the Club will publish one of its most ambitious works, *A PICTORIAL TOUR IN HAWAII, 1850-1852; Paintings and Watercolors of James Gay Sawkins*. Written by David Forbes and designed and printed by Jack Stauffacher of the Greenwood Press, the book will be embellished with forty-five full-color plates. Noted Book Club author Richard Dillon has written the Foreword. In his introduction Forbes writes: "The most complete and important extant pictorial record of the 19th Century Hawaiian landscape survives in the work of James Gay Sawkins."

Gary F. Kurutz, Chair, Publications Committee

LETTERS

With this issue we bid farewell to the Club's printer (for a decade now), Wesley B. Tanner, who is moving to Ann Arbor, Michigan (please see Announcement on page 109). Mr. Linden's letter which follows is a timely expression of thanks to Wesley and carries with it the grateful sentiments of the staff and membership of the Club as well. Mr. Linden writes:

Dear Harlan [Kessel],

Though, for years, I have eagerly awaited each issue of the *News-Letter*, not until the appearance of the checklist of Wesley Tanner's work (Vol. LV, Numbers 3 & 4 [Summer & Autumn, 1990]) have I been moved to write a congratulatory letter. Not only are these two issues remarkably imaginative and beautiful in design, the bibliographical importance of the information in these two issues cannot be overstated. Wesley's contributions to the world of fine printing are now aptly and admirably chronicled. I think that the authors Glen Humphreys and Martha Whittaker are to be congratulated for their obviously exhaustive research, and you, as well, for publishing it.

It may interest more recent members that there is a long tradition of publishing bibliographic checklists in the *News-Letter*. The first that come to my mind appeared in the 1960s. A two-part series of the Checklist of San Francisco's Windsor Press by Duncan H. Olmsted is found in Volume XXVI, Numbers 1 and 2 (Winter 1960, Spring 1961). Herman Cohen's checklist of the Hammer Creek Press appeared in Volume XXVII, Number 4, Fall 1962. Jane Wilson's checklist of the work of Adrian Wilson was published in Volume XXXIII, Numbers 2 & 3 (Spring and Summer, 1968) and formed the basis of his later auto-bibliography, *The Work and Play of Adrian Wilson*. Happily, these lists are descriptive. More recently, a lengthy informal

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history of The Rather Press by Roger K. Larson, M.D., appeared in Volume LIII, Number 4, Autumn 1988, though disappointingly, to my mind, the checklist appended to that article lacked any description.

Together with the anecdotal articles that have graced these pages, the bibliographic checklists provide an invaluable source of information to bibliographers, scholars, and collectors. It is my fervent hope that the *News-Letter* will continue to publish such descriptive checklists. To my mind, this is one of the more important functions of our quarterly publication, and it is an endeavor that is both wholly appropriate to its mission and fully deserving of the considerable space and expense required to produce them.

Sincerely,
James Linden
Linden Editions, San Francisco

GIFTS & ACQUISITIONS

From member and bookdealer Preston C. Beyer we have received a clutch of exciting small printed pieces from various printers and publishers. (Note: In our winter 1989 *Quarterly* we listed Mr. Beyer's first batch of fascinating gifts.) The latest bunch is headed by a Robert Louis Stevenson item, *The Bandbox*, printed privately "At the Sign of the George," 1921. It contains a four-line facsimile of RLS's contributions to a then planned small "newspaper" by Charles H. C. Wright and Samuel Lloyd Osbourne, two boys about the same age in 1878, who were then living in France with their mothers. This charming booklet was printed on a handmade paper and stitched to a pretty paste-paper wrapper. The colophon reads: "This incidental contribution to the story of Robert Louis Stevenson's courtship has been put into type on the forty-first anniversary of his marriage to the playmate's mother, Mrs. Osbourne."

The second item is *Design & Paper*, being No. 17 of a series of pamphlets issued by Marquardt & Company, Fine Papers, New York. This issue is devoted to the work of Norman Kent, an excellent wood engraver, and it is titled, *The Bookplates and Marks by Norman Kent*, 1944. The engravings are all reproduced very well in various colors.

Third, we have two pamphlets printed in Cambridge on two different aspects of unusual items in the Harvard Library. The first is *The Gay Collection of English Civil War Tracts, 1640-1661*, with a facsimile of two different books discussed. The other is *The Farnsworth Room in the Harvard College Library*. Both items have been nicely printed on a handmade paper and both were printed in 1916.

Fourth, we have an amusing booklet with the title, *A Comp's-Eye View of Cat.s* by Emerson G. Wulling, the Sumac Press, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1976. This is a "How To" and a "How Not To" set and print a bookdealer's catalogue, and the author produces a sample three-page catalog at the end of this essay. By the way, the author admits that he was "partly inspired" by David Magee's *Course in Correct Cataloging*, 1959.

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Fifth is an eight-page pamphlet, *The John Barnard Associates*, a name adopted as a club name for Harvard book lovers in February 1927. This copy is signed by George Parker Winship in June 1927, and it was printed in an edition of only 40 copies for a meeting in June “At the Sign of the George.”

Sixth is a printed letter from J. Ben Lieberman, New York, October 14, 1977, enclosing a printed address by Rollo G. Silver on *Writing the History of American Printing*. This piece is printed in two colors by Edna Beilenson in an edition of 1,000.

Seventh is a single page printed on both sides, a memorial for William Carl Fels that was read at First Church in Old Bennington on 13 December 1964, being a service honoring Fels’s death on November 29 of that year. This is a very curiously printed and typeset piece, inserted in a simple green paper folder with Fels’s name on the cover and noting that this is one of 7,500 copies! Who *was* Mr. Fels?

Finally, our eighth item is *A Pride of Printers*, Ashland, Oregon, The October Press, 1975. This forty-odd page booklet is a real charmer. It was printed in an edition of nine hundred copies, of which seven hundred were produced for the American Printing History Association. Our copy is number 655. This well organized and well printed booklet was the result and work of the printing class conducted by Lewis Osborne before his death (see the notice on Osborne under “Gifts & Acquisitions” in the Winter 1990 *Quarterly*). The printing class compiled a capsule history in 21 chapters of “great moments” in printing—beginning with papermaking in China in 105 A.D. and ending with Bruce Rogers. The copy was edited by Osborne and the booklet was copyrighted by him in 1975. (Speaking of Osborne, I erred in referring to him as the Master of the Press of the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco in the Winter 1990 *Quarterly*—he was actually a Roxburghe Printer’s Devil.)

From member Sal Glynn, who is also Managing Editor of the Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, California (P.O. Box 7123, 94707), an “old friend”—John C. Tarr’s hand-lettered *Decoration & Its Uses* by Edward Johnston. This welcome “repeat performance” was first issued by Tarr in Oakland, in offset, but in a less handsome binding. Tarr was an Englishman and a former (in his prime) student of Edward Johnston in lettering and of Eric Gill in stonecutting. After World War I, he joined the Monotype Corporation in London and during this time wrote several books on lettering and on printing. Sometime in the 1950’s, after studies in Spain and North Africa, he came to California and began working with young letterpress printers. Clifford Burke became a friend and promoted lectures for Tarr. According to the publisher’s note on the inside jacket, in 1990 Ten Speed Press found the negatives from the original paper-bound edition published by the Double Eagle Press. This is an excellent facsimile and a real source book that should never go out of print. The Club is delighted to have this book; for reasons unknown at this time, we never owned the original offset facsimile produced in the 1950’s. Our thanks to Sal Glynn. We look forward to their future publications.

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When in our spring issue we discussed an unusual early California press book that member Joseph D'Ambrosio found and bought for The Club in Chicago, it brought a quick response from member Nancy Weston explaining the people involved, one of whom was her father, and the private printing of three extraordinary Berkeley men—but more, offering us another unusual example of their, to us, “unknown” private press. All very well and good—until Miss Weston sent us her two bound copies of the complete *Far Afield* magazine, and in which we discovered to our complete embarrassment that sometime in early 1987, Judge Sherrell Halbert, a member, gave us an incomplete run of this small magazine and that in our Autumn issue of the *Quarterly*, we commented on two unusual articles, one on Frederic Goudy and the other by Edward Taylor of Taylor & Taylor! Sorry, reader. Blame this on a fickle memory. We have now returned the two bound copies to Nancy with an apology and thanks. But there is more. Happily, Nancy sent us the last published work of the Arundo Press, a specially bound copy of *The Flight of the Flying Philometa*, written by “The Good Companions, William Bunket Weston, Warren Charles Perry, Frederick Folger Thomas, Jr., Berkeley, 1959.” This charmer is a reprint from three articles that first appeared in *Far Afield*. Mounted on the inside front cover is a section of a map of California and Nevada, all place names in Latin. This was a trip, Miss Weston writes,



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that the three authors made in 1912 via wagon up and over Ebbetts Pass to Tahoe and into Nevada before returning home by way of the Sonora Pass. She adds, "I think there were only 24 copies printed."

This then is the rarest of the Arundo Press items and our sincere thanks (again) to Miss Weston.

ALBERT SPERISEN

The Club has just received as a gift of the author Chris Smith's *Striking Beauty* (*celebrating wonder*). Kabir Publishing Company, 139 City View Drive, Daly City, California 94014-3401. Printed by Susan Acker at The Feathered Serpent Press, this book has spectacularly designed end sheets—a vision of energy and space. The title page contains an interesting design of two circles in two colors overlapping to make three, giving a four-color effect overall. The text is modern free verse and the printing reflects the stark nature of the poems. We wish to thank Chris Smith for the addition to the library. Our copy is Number 94 in an edition of 225 copies.

BARBARA LAND

A nice little addition to our books and booklets on forgeries comes in the form of DeGolyer Library Keepsake, Number Four, Southern Methodist University, 1990. The author and printer are one and the same, our good friend W. Thomas Taylor. The title is *The Plot of Bartolomé Pagés*, and it deals with the first reward poster ever offered in Texas. The time is 1836, following the Battle of San Jacinto; the "most illustrious prisoner" is Santa Anna; Bartolomé Pagés is suspected of plotting to steal him away to Mexico by way of New Orleans. Thus the reward poster, the first (and only) of which was discovered by Morris Cook, an Austin book collector in early 1955. Taylor provides an amusing analysis of some of the forgeries that followed.

HARLAN KESSEL

Wesley B. Tanner : Typographic Design

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Announcing the publication of

TEXFAKE

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With an Introduction by
LARRY McMURTRY

Since the first disclosure of the discovery of forged copies of early Texas documents appeared in April 1988, rumors have swirled concerning them. Substantial articles touching on various aspects of the affair have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Texas Monthly*, and *The New Yorker*; a conference on forgeries has been held at the University of Houston; but until now there has been no definitive account of the history and impact of the Texas forger and his wares.

Texfake is the result of over three years of investigation. In precise language it lays out the facts concerning the forgeries: who made them; when they were made; how they were made; how they were discovered and proven to be spurious. In addition, it addresses forthrightly the involvement of prominent dealers in the sale of the documents, investigating whether they knew, or should have known, what they were selling. It reveals for the first time the devastating impact of the looting of Texas libraries by thieves during the 1960s, including the startling revelation that the University of Texas and the Texas State Library, in an atmosphere described as "frantic hush-hush," bought at a New York auction items they fully believed to be stolen state property.

All of the printed documents known to have been forged or fabricated are discussed in detail, including interesting accounts of historical circumstances of the original, genuine printings, and an up-to-date census of every known copy, genuine or fake. There are thirty-nine illustrations, displaying how to distinguish between genuine and forged copies of broadsides.

Larry McMurtry provides an amusing but clear-eyed account of the principal dealers involved in the affair, describing their "top-speed stampede through the trade." His portrayal of their character and motivations, and the milieu in which they operated, creates a context in which the author's largely dispassionate account of the forgeries seems an almost inevitable outcome. 7 x 10 inches, cloth-bound, approximately 140 pages, 39 illustrations. \$45.00, plus shipping.

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